

Essay An Essay

On

Temperament

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By

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Essay on Temperament

By Temperament I understand that individual Constitution of the Body (or Mind) that makes it susceptible to the action of Remedies (or other causes) in a peculiar or specific manner. So that different individuals are differently affected by the same Remedy (or cause)

The same diet for example may produce gout in one and Dyspepsia in another. Or the same accident may produce different mental effects in two persons differently Constituted

In examining the present systems of Temperament they appear to be based on the Humoral Pathology. The different Temperaments being named according to the supposed prevalence of one or the other humour. as Phlegmatic. Melancholic. Choleric.

Sanguineous - Which terms by long use have come to be very generally understood and having a fixed meaning are of great value in description - most persons having a tolerably clear idea as to what is meant by a "Bilious" or "Phlegmatic" individual.

However curious and valuable are the observed facts that have (in the progress of science) been heaped up around this System of Temperaments Yet as the Humoral theory itself has been in a great measure discarded the System of Temperaments founded upon it has very little practical relation to the present Systems of Medicine.

The Humoral System of Temperaments appears to have been consistent with the other parts of Medical knowledge and the theories of its day and to have been made practically useful by the Humoral Physicians in the prescription of remedies.

But since that theory of medicine has crumbled away its System of Temperaments has been found of so little value by the Rational School that they appear to look upon it as an old medical relic or curiosity rather than something to be put to

every day use - Whatever uses they make of the observed facts connected with it appear to refer principally to Prognosis - little or none to the prescription of remedies -

My reading of the works of the Rational School is so very limited that the following remark is of very little weight. But I do not remember noticing in any Rational prescription that the medicine was chosen on account of its specific relation, or adaptation, to the Temperament of the patient.

Indeed such a precaution would probably be entirely useless - For the massive doses given by them are so violent in their action that the specific, characteristic, action of the medicines are mostly lost in those general or poisonous effects which almost every remedy will produce if the dose is properly regulated.

Vomiting, purging, vesication &c. being merely the efforts which nature makes to throw out or repel every poison.

And truly, these general or poisonous effects claim entirely the attention of the Rationals and are the only ones their remedies are intended or desired to produce - If none such poisonous effects

are observed to follow the administration of a remedy they think it has done no good

The Rationalists do then not only overlook the specific action of remedies (which may be called the Temperament of the Remedies) but also pay so little attention to the Temperament of the individual that it has almost no connection with their prescriptions

The system of Temperaments is one of the flowers of their literature - An intellectual nosegay - Or it may be compared to an old tool Of so little practical use that they have not kept it in repair, nor altered it to suit their present labours -

But to the Homeopath the signs of Temperament, both of body and mind, are of daily and hourly use in practice Nor would any skilled Homeopath conclude upon prescribing a remedy without first enquiring within himself as to its adaptation, in this respect, to the case before him.

When we come to reflect upon the Temperament of man and notice so much of it as is within the power of our observation we find that Temperament is due to an adaptation of all the parts of the body to each other.

For the body is tempered or made up of many organs, which are fitted to each other in such endless combinations that probably there are no two individuals exactly alike on the whole face of the globe, and this applies not to man only but to every living creature. Each has its individual or specific place in the Creation.

There is a temperament of the mind as well as of the body. The mind appearing to be also composed of many organs or faculties (mental organization).

The mind and Body are connected together to form the man and are so intimately related that nothing can affect the one without also affecting the other, both in health and disease.

Here we see the insufficiency of a theory that would

form all Temperaments from a Combination of Four Elements

So also formerly, and not very long ago, the whole Creation was supposed to consist of various Combinations of only four elements Earth, Water, Air, and Fire. Modern Chemistry with more exactness has shown the error of this old doctrine and replaced it by a better

In considering the variety of Temperaments (as composed of many Combinations of the same organs) we will find an explanation of the necessity of many powers to try one medicine. For as no two are organized alike, the same remedy will cause different symptoms both direct and sympathetic in the different organizations =

Homeopathy though using among other things the old Humoral terms in its descriptions of Temperament is gradually emancipating itself from old ideas, and constructing for itself a system of Temperaments suitable for its daily wants

The Pulsatilla temperament - the *crux* temperament, with

many others, may some day come to be words that can stand alone without the necessity of being explained in Humoral terms

All theories and systems should have relation to some practical use and not be mere things to talk about.

Homeopaths should construct their System of Temperaments with a single eye to daily usefulness - retaining only so much of the old system as is necessary to describe Homeopathic Temperaments

The following extracts from M^r. Sturain's life of Abernethy (N. York 1853) are intended to show that both in health and disease there exists an intimate relation of each organ to every other organ in the body.

"Pa. 351 - - A sea faring man brought a piece of bone, about three or four inches in length, as he said from New Zealand, and offered it for sale at one or two museums, and among others at the College of Surgeons. We shall not here detain the reader by telling all that happened

" These things are often brought with intent to deceive, and
" with false allegations. Most of those to whom the bone was
" submitted dismissed it as worthless, or manifested their incredulity;
" among other guesses some insinuated that they had seen bones
" very much like it at the London Tavern, regarding it, in fact,
" as part of an old marrow bone, to which it bore, on superficial
" view, some resemblance. At length it was brought to Professor
" Owen, who having looked at it carefully, thought it right
" to investigate it more narrowly; and after much consideration,
" he ventured to pronounce his opinion, This opinion from almost
" any body else would have been perhaps only laughed at, for in
" the first place, he said that the bone (big enough, as we have
" seen, to suggest that it had belonged to an ox) had belonged to
" a bird; but before people had had time to recover from
" their surprise or other sensation created by this announcement,
" they were greeted by another assertion yet more startling,
" namely, that it had been a bird without wings.
" The incredulity and doubt with which the opinion was received

"was too great for a time even for the authority of Professor
"Owen entirely to dispel. But mark the truthfulness of a real
"science! Contemplate the exquisite beauty and accuracy of relation
"in nature! By and by a whole skeleton was brought over
"to this country, when the opinion of the Professor was converted
"into an established fact. Nor was this all; there was this
"appropriate symbol to perpetuate the triumph - that which had
"appeared as the most startling feature, of what had been scarcely
"better received than as a wild conjecture, was so accurate in
"fact as to form the most appropriate name to the animal thus
"discovered - It was accordingly named the Apteryx or wingless
"from the greek"

Here we find a Professor of Comparative Anatomy picking
up a bone - one component of the body, and from his previous
study he is able to predict what will be other component
parts of the same body - This is a practical proof that the
relations of organs with each other are fixed, and that by
careful study, this relationship may be understood

It was said of Cuvier that he could pick up a bone, and from it give quite a history of an animal he had never seen, merely by his knowledge of Comparative Anatomy - which is a knowledge in point of fact of the different organs composing the body and their relations to each other -

Hunter appears to have made a great study of the sympathies aroused by disease - we find on
"Pa. 153... Hunter's observations on the subject in his lectures
"were extremely numerous, and elaborate even to tediousness
"The more humorous and lively part of the audience would
"be tittering, the more sober and unexcitable quietly dosing
"into a nap, while the studious and penetrative few appeared
"to be seriously impressed with the value of Mr. Hunter's
"observations and enquiries"

Pa. 154 - Abernethy with his characteristic tendency to
"Simplification said "Well what Mr. Hunter tells us
"resolves itself into this That the whole body sympathizes
"with all its parts" *

* Note over leaf.

Note to Pa. 10. The same idea will be found in Paul's 1st Epistle to the
Corinthians xii, 26. = "And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it"

The passage reads thus - Commencing at verse 25.

25. There should be no schism in the body. But the members should have the same
care one for another

26. And whether (ἢτε either, or) one member (μελος, a member, limb, harmonious
part, or symmetric part) suffers all the members suffer with it, or (ἢτε) one
member be honoured all the members rejoice with it

1 mo. 13. 55.

Pa. 152. Hunter asserted "That the organ secondarily affected
"sometimes appeared to suffer more than the organ to which
"the disturbance had first been directed"

In a certain sense drugs may be said to have Tem-
peraments that is in relation to the temperament of the
individual over whom they exercise most control and with
relation to the diseases or diseased organs in which their specific
powers (or symptoms) are most manifested

In the Introduction to Halls Jahr Pa. vi (It is omitted
in the Symptomen Codex) Jahr says "For our own part we
are never guided by any single symptom It is the general
"Characteristic resulting from the total Pathogenesis that
controls us in our appreciation of particular symptoms of
every kind. This is our rule for determining the choice of a
medicine; it is the rule we have observed in tracing out the
"tableaux of this work; and it should be that of every
"Homoeopathic Physician who would escape deception, For,
"when some isolate feature fails in exact resemblance to the

"Symptomatology of the Materia Medica, the total physiognomy,
"such as results from the ensemble of the symptoms, will not
"on that account be less exact than the best portrait after
"nature; and whosoever shall acquire by profound study the
"truly essential characteristic will be in possession of a science
"that the knowledge of single features can never give"

This is what I understand Professor Williamson to mean
by "The Genius of a Remedy"

In order to a perfect Similia the temperament of the
person, the disease, and the remedy should have a certain
relation to each other

There is a tendency in certain diseases to attack or exempt
certain Temperaments - Pharaoh's lean kine dont have the Gout.

But if certain organs are in a state of either uncommon
activity or depression, it may in a manner change the
Temperament of the individual and affect his liability to
disease

In observing the Temperament of an individual it is necessary not only to notice those Organs &c. that are disproportionately large and active but those too that are disproportionately weak and inactive. Some remedies as well as some diseases appearing to act by depressing the weak and inactive parts - Others by exciting the strong and active parts, so as to exhaust through them the vital energy, and derange the organism

The Humoral System merely noted those humours that were in excess

Some are particularly strong in certain organs so that they are little liable to certain Diseases. - Others may have little strength in the same organs and so be particularly to those same diseases - And for practical purposes an observation of the weak points in temperament is quite as important as of the strong

Hahnemann is particular in describing to what weaknesses, or diseases of mind and body the remedies are

applicable, whilst at the same time he notices those subjects that are not suitable - Thus giving the genius of the Remedy with disposition to weep, and in experience

His remarks on Nux, Pulsatilla and some other remedies appear to contain the pith of what is known concerning them down to the present day and hardly more

His observations of Mental symptoms appear to be those that excite most admiration among his followers who know their practical value - and most ridicule among his opponents who have never tested them

How can we wonder at the success of such an accurate and indefatigable observer

Speaking of Pulsatilla, Volume 4. Page 24. of the Materia Medica (N. York. 1846) he says

This Medicine acts best when not only its physical symptoms are Homoeopathic to the disease, but when the action which Pulsatilla is capable of exercising upon the mind and temperament is analogous to the

patients temperament or the state of his mind - The disposition which corresponds best to the nature of Pulsatilla is a timid disposition, with disposition to weep, and to experience silent grief and chagrin, a mild and yielding disposition especially when the patient has been good humoured and bland in his good days or disposed to levity and kindly meant malice - Flow and phlegmatic temperaments correspond to Pulsatilla, but least of all men of quick decision and movements although they may appear even to good natured. Absence of thirst and occasional chilliness are additional indications. He then goes on to describe its action in relation to the menses, sleepiness, time of aggravation, diet - Its antidotes &c. This may be looked upon as the general description of the Pulsatilla temperament, though every symptom it is capable of producing really has a place in the picture.

The organism that is found above described is the one most susceptible to the direct action of Pulsatilla and most likely to have its sympathies aroused into union

with the part directly attacked by the Pulsatilla. —

Hahnemann merely observes and notes; he does not attempt to theorise or account for the action of Pulsatilla in such individuals. This was a practical demonstration of his

Time may come when; instead of the old worn out Divisions of Temperament derived from the Humoral Pathology, there will be substituted a division suitable to the Homoeopathic doctrines. The names of the more prominent remedies taking the place of the Bile, Phlegm, and other nastiness.

Such a description would be of practical every day value to the Homoeopathic Student and assist his appreciation of remedies by those observations and Comparisons that our Professors have made after long experience.

Such a description would be of little or no use to the Rational man and serve strongly to characterise a difference between the two methods of practice.

(over)

In Professor Williamson's lecture of 11mo. 3rd. 1854 On the Subject of Aconite he mentioned to the class that he himself was "About as good an Aconite Subject as you could pick up" This was a practical demonstration of his lecture, which probably no student that heard it will ever forget - a demonstration more valuable than the picture of the flower

The student of medicine should study as much as possible from the living subject - As Faith without works is dead - So book knowledge without practical experience is dead also - and can be nothing but a lifeless theory

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